

The Spy Next Door: Intentional Misuse of Access to Information, Data Security & Society's Diminishing Ideology of Privacy

Abstract

Much has been written regarding the vulnerability of privacy in the current age of big data. However, little has been written about the actions of individuals, and the intentional misuse of access to friends and family members' private information (i.e. snooping). In contrast to government or corporate misuse of information, these kinds of privacy breaches are not for financial gain, surveillance or identity theft. Rather this misuse of information is purely out of curiosity about the personal lives of friends, family and acquaintances. The purpose of this paper is to not only examine the realm of snooping, but also to understand why it happens, why incidents of snooping are on the rise, and how generational differences influence rates of snooping. Relevant theories from psychology will be sought out to explain why snooping may occur, and why deterrents do not influence rates of snooping. Considering the long-term impact of having a workforce that is increasingly susceptible to snooping, information professionals will become crucial to creating a balance between availability and security of sensitive information, and creating a culture that motivates individuals to use information with integrity.

Keywords: snooping, privacy, misuse of access to information, generational differences in privacy, information integrity